



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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July 15, 2009

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – COUNSELING
AND RESEARCH ASSOCIATES dba MASADA HOMES – NEWELL
AND RALSTON GROUP HOMES**

We have completed a review of Newell and Ralston Group Homes (Group Home or Agency) operated by Counseling and Research Associates dba Masada Homes. The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department.

Newell and Ralston Group Homes are each six-bed facilities, which provide care for boys ages 13-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring review, Newell Group Home was providing services for three Los Angeles County Probation children and Ralston Group Home was providing services for one DCFS child and five Los Angeles County Probation children.

Newell Group Home is located in the Second District and Ralston Group Home is located in the Fourth District.

Scope of Review

The purpose of our review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. In addition, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, employee records, a facility

inspection and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. However, the Agency needs to address a few deficient areas. Specifically:

- Both Group Homes need to properly maintain medication distribution logs.
- Newell Group Home needs to replace missing light bulbs and light fixture covers in the bathrooms.
- Ralston Group Home needs to clean the shower doors in the upstairs bathroom and maintain current court authorizations for all of the children taking psychotropic medication.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:MMO:JET:DC:AA:bg

Attachment

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Ted Myers, Chief Deputy Director, DCFS
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, DCFS
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer
George Igi, Board President and Executive Director, Counseling and Research
Associates dba Masada Homes
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**Counseling and Research Associates dba Masada Homes
Newell Group Home
Lawndale, CA 90260
License Number: 198201957
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Newell Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped.

Overall, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained and provides a home-like environment. The common quarters are neat and clean and there is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. However, the children's bathrooms are missing light bulbs and light fixture covers.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting and storage space and the window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, the beds all have a full complement of linens, and the children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age-appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendation

- 1. Masada Group Home management replace the missing light bulbs and light fixture covers in the children's bathrooms.**

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children meet the Group Home’s population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within 30 days of placement.

The treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

Recommendation

None.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are attending school, are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs and are progressing satisfactorily. The Group Home’s program includes the development of children’s daily living, self-help and survival skills. Children are also provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendation

None.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which

they have an interest. The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendation

None.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

Children have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication and the children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist. Children are also informed about their psychotropic medication and are aware of their right to refuse medication. However, the medication distribution logs are not properly maintained.

Recommendation

- 2. Masada Group Home management properly maintain medication distribution logs.**

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Interviews with children

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Home’s policies and procedures. Children feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, have private visitors and attend religious services of their choice.

The discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children are satisfied with the meals and snacks. Children also receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

Recommendation

None.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes and the clothing provided is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

None.

VIII. Personnel Background Checks

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Sample size for employee record evaluation: Eight

Comments:

The Group Home has obtained the required criminal and child abuse clearances for their employees.

Recommendation

None.

**Counseling and Research Associates dba Masada Homes
Ralston Group Home
Redondo Beach, California 90277
License Number: 191600997
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Ralston Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped.

Overall, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained and provides a home-like environment. The common quarters are neat and clean and there is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. However, the shower doors in the children's upstairs bathroom are dirty.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age-appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendation

- 1. Masada Group Home management clean the shower doors in the upstairs bathroom.**

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children meet the Group Home’s population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within 30 days of placement.

The treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

Recommendation

None.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are attending school, are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs and are progressing satisfactorily. The Group Home’s program includes the development of children’s daily living, self-help and survival skills. Children are also provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendation

None.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which

they have an interest. The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendation

None.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

The children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist, are informed about their psychotropic medication, and are aware of their right to refuse medication. However, all of the children do not have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication and the medication distribution logs are not properly maintained.

Recommendations

2. Masada Group Home management:

- a. Ensure that all children taking psychotropic medication have current court authorizations.**
- b. Properly maintain medication distribution logs.**

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Interviews with children

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Home’s policies and procedures. Children feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, have private visitors and attend religious services of their choice.

The discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children are satisfied with the meals and snacks. Children also receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

Recommendation

None.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes and the clothing provided is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

None.

VIII. Personnel Background Checks

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Sample size for employee record evaluation: Eight

Comments:

The Group Home has obtained the required criminal and child abuse clearances for their employees.

Recommendation

None.

May 4, 2009



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A Division of Counseling & Research Associates

Department of Auditor-Controller, Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
350 S. Figueroa St., 8th Floor, Los Angeles CA 90071
Attention: Ms. Belinda Gipson, Group Home Audit

RE: Correction Action Plan for the Newell House (#198201957)

Dear Ms. Gibson,

Based upon the findings of your audit, the following Corrective Action Plan has been instituted:

Regarding the finding for Item I (Facility and Environment):

1. The recommendations mentioned (replace missing light bulbs and light fixtures) were corrected immediately by our maintenance staff. In order to address the problem noted in Item I, on an on-going basis, the group home staff will be responsible for inspecting the home on a daily basis to ensure compliance with Title XXII. The Masada Homes Day Supervisor will thoroughly inspect all group homes for compliance with Title XXII regulations and contractual obligations, on a weekly basis.

Regarding the finding for Item V (Psychotropic Medication):

2. The on-duty agency staff will be responsible for maintaining and initialing the group home medication logbook (when medication is dispensed to residents). Our agency on-duty supervisors will review the medication logbooks daily to ensure compliance with Title XXII regulations and contractual obligations. The Medical Department will also review the medication logbooks at least once a week to also ensure the prescribed psychotropic medication is being distributed and documented correctly.

Corrective Action Plan (Newell House)

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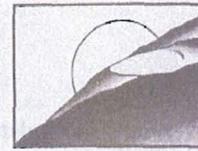
We hope that this Corrective Action Plan meets with your approval. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (310) 715 – 2020.

Sincerely,



**Bernard Smith, MSW
Division Director
Masada Homes**

May 4, 2009



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A Division of Counseling & Research Associates

Department of Auditor-Controller, Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
350 S. Figueroa St., 8th Floor, Los Angeles CA 90071
Attention: Ms. Belinda Gipson, Group Home Audit

RE: Correction Action Plan for the Ralston House (#191600997)

Dear Ms. Gibson,

Based upon the findings of your audit, the following Corrective Action Plan has been instituted:

Regarding the finding for Item I (Facility and Environment):

1. The recommendation mentioned (clean the shower door) was corrected immediately by our maintenance staff. In order to address the problem noted in Item I, on an on-going basis, the group home staff will be responsible for inspecting the home on a daily basis to ensure compliance with Title XXII. The Masada Homes Day Supervisor will thoroughly inspect all group homes for compliance with Title XXII regulations and contractual obligations, on a weekly basis.

Regarding the finding for Item V (Psychotropic Medication):

- 2a. The agency's protocol for ensuring compliance with the Group Home Contract regarding obtaining current court authorization for all children is as follows : Psychotropic Medication Authorizations (PMA's) are filled out by the psychiatrist after prescribing medication to a client. The Psychotropic Medication Authorizations are then faxed to Juvenile Court using number indicated to the PMA form. The psychiatric record of these contacts is kept in the Mental Health file of the client. If no response has been received by the fourth week, another call will be made to the Juvenile Court and a log number of the PMA will be requested to show the court has received the request. Again a record of this contact will be placed in the Mental Health file.
- 2b. The on-duty agency staff will be responsible for maintaining and initialing the

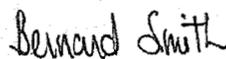
Corrective Action Plan (Ralston House)

Page 2

group home medication logbook (when medication is dispensed to residents). Our agency on-duty supervisors will review the medication logbooks daily to ensure compliance with Title XXII regulations and contractual obligations. The Medical Department (Nurse) will also review the medication logbooks at least once a week to also ensure the prescribed psychotropic medication is being distributed and documented correctly.

We hope that this Corrective Action Plan meets with your approval. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (310) 715 – 2020.

Sincerely,



Bernard Smith, MSW
Division Director
Masada Homes